

You (whisper) have just won the jackpot

The Iowa Lottery won't use a loud jingle when tickets are cashed in.

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Don't expect to start hearing snappy musical jingles signaling winners cashing in tickets for Iowa Lottery games.

The Iowa Lottery Board agreed Thursday it might be dangerous to alert everybody in a retail store that a lottery player has claimed a cash prize.

"A winning jingle might tip off stalkers to a particular player's good fortune, leaving that person vulnerable to attack once they left the retail establishment," said Lottery Vice President Mary Neubauer in a report to the board.

Slot machines at Iowa's casinos have traditionally erupted in a burst of melodic tones to signify when a gambler has won a cash prize. But the casinos have full-time security teams working around the clock to protect customers, according to state gambling regulators, unlike many Iowa retail establishments that may be staffed only by one or two clerks selling lottery tickets.

The discussion of the jingle music was prompted by an Iowa Lottery staff report on lottery security procedures that raised the question of hiring an outside consultant to conduct a review. The report was developed in response to a series of security-related consumer protection issues that have surfaced in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

The Iowa Lottery Board agreed Thursday it won't hire an outside consultant, believing Iowa is already a leader in addressing lottery security issues.

"Our security staff is doing a great job, and I think with technology continuing to advance, it will be more and more difficult for folks to steal from the lottery," said Chairman Tim Clausen, a Sioux City lawyer.

Clausen said Iowa Lottery investigators already have the ability to identify the exact time tickets are purchased, and many retailers have surveillance cameras to identify customers when questions are raised, improving their ability to solve lottery-related crimes.

While the Iowa Lottery has taken many steps throughout the years to protect its players, the problems in Canada deserve attention by all lotteries, Neubauer said. The issues there date to 2001 when an Ontario man checked his lottery tickets at a variety store. The owner's wife told

him he had won a free ticket, but didn't mention other prizes.

The man later became suspicious when he read in a newspaper the store owner and his wife had won a \$250,000 prize. After three years of civil litigation, the man received settlements of \$150,000 from the retailers and \$200,000 from the Ontario Lottery.

The Iowa Lottery requires those applying for a lottery retail license to undergo background checks by the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, Neubauer said. Anyone convicted of a fraud, felony or gambling violation cannot be licensed as an Iowa Lottery retailer. At the time of the incident in Ontario, no pre-screening was done of lottery product sellers, she said.

In addition, the Iowa Lottery issues terms and conditions for its retail licenses, and sellers must comply or risk a license suspension, Neubauer said. Any conviction for fraud, compromising the security or integrity of the lottery, illegal gambling or any felony would lead to a license revocation. At the time of the Ontario case, there was no specific "Code of Conduct" for lottery retailers there, she said.

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